

To the Members of the California State Senate:

I am returning Senate Bill 382 without my signature.

One of the most basic rights of any citizen is the right to vote. This is why current law provides a special exemption for new citizens to register to vote up to seven days before an election. This bill allows new citizens whose naturalization ceremonies are held less than seven days before an election to register on the day of an election itself.

Allowing any group of people, regardless of the size of the group, to register and vote on the same day poses both logistical and security concerns. Voter registration deadlines are in place to provide elections officials a reasonable opportunity to verify registration information. The People of California recognized the importance of reasonable voter registration deadlines when they rejected Proposition 52 of 2002, which would have allowed for same-day registration.

As an immigrant myself, I understand how exciting and important it is for new citizens to participate in the democratic process. Thankfully, few naturalization ceremonies are conducted within seven days of an election. I encourage the proponents of this measure and the Secretary of State to work with the federal government to ensure this continues to be the case. Coordination between the state and federal government, not enacting a law that inadvertently opens the door to fraud, is the best way to help our state's newest citizens.

For these reasons I am returning this bill without my signature.

Sincerely,

Arnold Schwarzenegger